

HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN ALAMANCE COUNTY

To appreciate this sketch, a description of the country and people would help the reader to more fully understand the situation. ^{An} ~~This~~ old schoolhouse was located in Alamance County near the town of Graham at the place where Providence Church is now located on the backbone between the two streams Haw River, (Indian name, Saxapahaw,) and Big Alamance. In the forks of these two streams is the finest land to be found anywhere, abundant springs and brooks of the freshest waters. Our first settlers always took up the ^{best} land first; consequently, you found the best citizens where the best land was, and they always built near a spring as such a thing as digging a well was not thought of. ^{It was} a section noted for its industry, intelligent interprise, and liberty loving people.

When these people first settled, they first built a house to live in. The next was a schoolhouse which was used ^{for} as a general purpose house, school, preaching, singing school, debating society, and district political meetings.

It is a regrettable fact that the ^{Southern} gentleman or planter, as he was called at that time, was represented by many writers of that day as a man who stalked about in his top boots, spending his time in drinking rum and brandy, chasing foxes, and racing horses. This was a condition that existed in the mind of the men who wrote it, but not in fact. To discount a note or plead the statue of limⁱtation was a thing that one of them would not think of, and there are many instances where a father died owing debts and the sons worked and earned the money and paid them; and as for their religion, it was of a practical God-fearing kind; they lived and practiced it. I have before me the will of one of those old fellows that is a fair indication of what he really thought and believed, which I take the liberty to append:



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"In 1787, in the name of God, Amen. I, Nicholas Holt of Orange County, North Carolina, a planter being very sick, but of sound mind and memory, thanks be given to God, calling into mind the mortality of my body and knowing it is appointed for all men to die, do make and appoint this my last will and testament.

First of all, I give and recommend my soul to the hands of Almighty God that gave it and my body I recommend to the earth to be buried in a decent Christian burial at the desce^tension of my executors, nothing doubting but at the general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the Almighty power of God."

I have another, ^{will} by Sarah Harden; ~~the~~ first clause makes provision for her son John's education. It set apart a fund and if this is not sufficient, then there is another fund to be used; so it is very apparent that these people thought of other things besides frolicking.

It has been charged that the Christian Church was opposed to education. It ^{have} may at one time thought a preacher should wait for the Lord to put in his mind what he should say, but the time has come if a preacher waits for that he will ^{neither} not say much ^{or} have many hearers. The Friends or Quakers, tried that for many years, but found it did not work. That ^{idea of a preacher, needing little education} would naturally follow, for the country was thinly settled ^{with} few roads and the towns ^{were} far apart. When you left Hillsboro, the next town you came to was Salisbury. Guilford and Chatham had not been taken from Orange; so a preacher had to do a lot of traveling to meet his flock, and the idea of a non-educated ministry was not confined to any denomination. A preacher in this day and time without an education would cut about the same figure as the old time man with his reap-hook, ^{or} winnowing cloth, and flail, besides ~~the~~ the modern thirty-horse reaper and thresher combined. Space does not allow mention of ^{all} the first settlers of this section, but I will mention a few.

Adam Trollinger was born near the Rhine in Germany in 1681, settled on Haw River in 1745, died in 1776. He had a son, Jacob Henry, who was born in Germany in 1718; ~~he~~ ^{he} came to Haw River in 1745 and died in 1798. Jacob Henry had a son named Henry. He was born in 1762. When the ~~Revolution~~ ^{Revolution} broke out, his father sent him to the war and sent a negro with him as he said to help him fight. He served there three years and drew a pension as long as he lived. Henry had a son named John born in 1798. He had a sister, Elizabeth, who married John Roney, who had a daughter, ^{To this union were born} Artelia, who married Washington Duke, ~~who had~~ ^{he} two sons, J. B. and B. H. Duke, who have given more to education and charity than any ~~two~~ ^{men} that ever lived in North Carolina. When the North Carolina Railroad was being built, there was no one who would undertake the heavy grading at Raleigh. So Ben, and W. H. Trollinger took the job and did it ~~right~~ ^{very satisfactorily}. John Trollinger built the big railroad bank at Haw River. ~~W. H. Trollinger~~ ^{he} was a man who did not hesitate to help his fellow man when he found him in need. One of his neighbors got into trouble in Virginia near the Ohio line, and he rode horseback up there and got him out of the trouble. He never hesitated to help when he could. He had a tent at Providence Church and was always on hand at the Camp Meeting. If a farmer got behind with his work either by sickness or misfortune, the neighbors would go and help him. A Christian spirit was always ~~present~~ ^{present} with them.

The oldest ^{log} school house with the brick floor was the seed planted many years ago that grew and weathered the storms of many years and faced many scenes of adversity, but it has finally become a living reality in the magnificent and well equipped ^{As to} Elon College. ~~Now~~ ^{however} when this schoolhouse was built, we have no records to show. ^{she} We can arrive at a date by the age of men who were teachers there. There was a literary society there. They had a valuable library with a lot of very valuable books in a house

built for that purpose. They had their debating society and undoubtedly enjoyed many pleasant hours at their meetings, ~~and from the many years I have heard of the occurrences there, they doubtless~~

~~had a good time.~~ Daniel C. Turrentine taught school there about 1792. ~~on was John Steel Turrentine.~~ ^{Daniel C. Turrentine's wife was the daughter of Col. John Steele of Revolutionary fame - his} James Mulholland taught about the same time; Able, John and

Benjamin Rainey were teachers there; Joe Thomas about 1810; Jonathan Freeland about 1812; then followed Jerry Whidbee, Jonathan Worth, later Governor of North Carolina; W. F. Bason, C. F. Faucette, John Faucette, John Mebane, Leonard Prather, ^{and} John Steel Turrentine about 1824. John Steel Turrentine was father of Capt. J. A. Turrentine,

prominent for many years in the political and religious life of Alamance County. Samuel Turrentine and William Holt Turrentine, Sr. ^{also taught there} a little later. William Holt Turrentine was father of Dr. S. B.

Turrentine, for many years presiding elder in the Western North Carolina M. E. Conference and ^{now} president ~~now~~ of Greensboro College for Women. Rev. John ^{R.} Holt first began teaching there in 1842.

He taught there several terms; ^{he} also ~~he~~ taught at his home in Chatham in 1851. ^{He} and Gaston Albright were teaching at the old log school house and when the Graham Institute was completed about 1852, he and Albert Anderson took charge of that school. Dr.

Martin Hanks of Chatham County used to preach at the old log school house and at the Grog Springs during the time Benjamin ^{Rainey} ~~Anderson~~ was teaching and preaching there. Hanks Chapel was named for him.

(This was about the last school ^{held in} the old log house). John R.

^{Holt} ~~Hall~~ and Albert Anderson conducted this school for a few years and gave it up. ^{John} Then John Swift and Edwin W. Beal taught a few terms and gave it up. ^{after this} then Archable Ray took charge. ^{then} the school was reorganized and W. H. Dougherty was made principal.

Joe King was professor of Greek with Dougherty's two daughters, Bell and Mary, as assistants. After running a while it was incorporated, Graham College, with W. H. Dougherty president ⁱⁿ 1859. W. H. Dougherty, Joe King, ~~and~~ Bell and Mary Dougherty conducted the school a while and gave it up. ^{then} then two men named Brem and Bray took charge. ^{the school} then Even conducted until the war between the states broke out and he

gave it up and went to the war. The College was sold at auction to satisfy a claim due B. F. Roney and bought by Henry J. B. Clark. He afterward sold it to Mrs. Mary Harden, ^{who} and she sold it to W. S. Long. We have not been able to find any record of the original promoters of the Graham Institute. It was started about 1848 or 1849, but it seems that the Trustees got no title to the land until 1859.

The Legislature of 1859 appointed Alfred Isley, John Faucette, P. R. Harden, Bennett ~~Haysell~~, and Willis Sellars incorporators of Graham College, and appointed W. H. Daugherty, Thomas J. Fowler, Peter R. Harden, Bennett ~~Haysell~~, John Faucette, William H. Faucette, Alfred Moring, William B. Wellons, Thomas J. Kilby, Robert M. Holland, Edward C. Riddick, Meredith H. Watkins, Jubilee Smith, James Minnis, and John Walker, Trustees of Graham College. I find that on the 27th day of May, 1859, ~~that~~ John Harden deeded to the above Trustees of Graham College the land on which the building stood consisting of five and seven tenths of an acre, for the sum of One Hundred and Forty-two Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$142.50). These Trustees were to have continuance for fifty years and were to be known by the style and name of "The Trustees of Graham College." We know of a fact that John Harden did not dispose of the property from 1849 to 1859. The Trustees of Graham Institute may have had ^{an} ~~ex~~ agreement with John Harden, but we can find no record of it. We know that John Harden had been the owner of the property for many years, so it would seem there was a ^{gentleman's} ~~general~~ agreement between them.

It seems that the question would naturally occur where does the Christian Church come in? Where does their right, title, or interest lay?

We find in 1858 that W. H. Boykin was appointed by the stockholders of Graham Institute to sell stock and we find in 1853 ^{at Randolph Co.,} ~~that~~ the conference of Mt. Pleasant, T. J. Fowler was appointed to raise funds for the relief of Graham Institute. In 1850 the

conference appointed E. F. Watson, John Trollinger, C. F. Faucette, Pleasant A. Holt and Alfred Apple, Trustees of Graham Institute. This is proof that the Church looked upon the school as being one of their enterprises. But evidently ~~that~~ the Church had no legal right or title, for when the suit was entered into by B. F. Roney, ~~(a brother of Mrs. Washington Duke)~~ ^{re} to cover his \$120.00 it was laid against the Trustees of Graham College and not the Trustees appointed by the Church. There came to be doubt therefore, that the Graham Institute and Graham College were really and truly enterprises upheld and fostered by the Christian Church.

We find further that there were a good many men from Eastern Virginia, Chatham and Randolph Counties attending these schools, the most of them were identified with the Christian Church. James W. Wellons and Richard Costen were ministerial students, Both of them ~~after~~ ^{after ordained} were ministers in the Church, and Uncle Wellons is now the pet of the Church.

We will ~~not~~ ^{now} go back to the log schoolhouse. One of the most prominent ~~men~~ ^{teachers and preachers} there was Benjamin Rainey. He was born in 1753, and we find that he was associated with James O'Kelly until a late date. ~~but~~ He was a teacher and a lay-preacher, what they called in those days an exhorter for sometime before he was ordained, and he held religious services at the log schoolhouse many years before his ordination. In 1776 when "man found man", he was prominent in exhorting his fellowmen, and pointing out to them that ~~his~~ ^{man's} duty to ~~him~~ ^{his fellowmen} was something more than to make ~~a~~ ^{a man must be} beast of burden of him. On the other ~~hand~~ ^{hand} ~~to~~ ^{are} impress the fact upon them that ~~he~~ ^{was both} was his brother's keeper. William Able and Benjamin Rainey ~~all~~ ^{literary} identified with the society at the log schoolhouse, and their descendants have up to this day stuck to the Christian Church. We can trace the Rainey family up to the present day and find that they were ~~strong~~ ^{staunch} friends to education and the Christian Church. Benjamin Rainey's wife was Rachael Sullinger, daughter of Thomas Sullinger. One of the daughters of Benjamin Rainey married Thomas Sellers who was the ~~father~~ ^{father} of Dr.

E. A. Sellars, ~~who was~~ the father of D. E. Sellars, W. R. Sellars, C. V. Sellars and T. L. Sellars, all of whom ~~were~~ ^{are} prominent in the Christian Church and ~~strong~~ ^{staunch} supporters of Elon College.

By going back to the time ~~for~~ ^{of} the log schoolhouse, a large number of parties that were educated around that old place who are prominent today ^{are} the Holts, the Hardens, the Longs, the Trollingers, the Tarpleys, the Fonvilles, the Gants, ^{the Rogers, the Bowers} the Albrights, the Stockards, the Whitsetts and Freeland. You will find their graves in ^{at} Province Cemetery and they all went to school at the old log schoolhouse. We find that most of the teachers were indentified with the Christian Church. Joe Thomas was a prominent man in the Church; he was ~~raised~~ ^{reared} near the schoolhouse and taught there. Rev. John R.

Holt began teaching there in 1842 and continued to teach there up to the finishing of Graham Institute, when he moved his school there.

These old men were building better than they knew, for the seed planted there one hundred and fifty years ago have borne fruit in our Elon College.

We have referred to the Rainey family. Another of Benjamin Rainey's daughters married Michael Holt, and he had two sons, William and Edwin. Dr. William ^{Holt} of Lexington, North Carolina was a very prominent man in his section, while Edwin was the pioneer cotton manufacturer in the Southern states. Both went to school at the old log schoolhouse to John Steel Turrentine about 1822. Edwin M. Holt had a son, Gov. T. M. Holt, governor of North Carolina and W. E. Holt, who died in Charlotte some time ago. ^{The father who also} ~~in cotton~~ ^{was educated} made a fortune at the log schoolhouse, ^{taught by} the Rev. John R. Holt about 1842. William Holt (Capt. Billy) married Elizabeth Rainey, ^{who} ~~she~~ had one son and died. Then William ^{Holt} with his son moved to Missouri where he was appointed Indian Agent. The town of Holt, Missouri was named ^{for} ~~after~~ him. He went to school at the old log schoolhouse about 1818. Jacob Long, the father of W. S. Long, D. A. Long, Judge Ben Long, Dr. Geo. Long and Jacob Long, ^{with his} ~~he and his~~ brother, William, attended school at the old log schoolhouse about 1812 to 1820 under the teaching of Joe Thomas, Jonathan

Freeland, and John Steel Turrentine. Ephraim Cook was born about 1748 and married another of those Sullinger girls. He had two children. A son, (Sullinger) died without issue, and Elizabeth, who married Mason Tarpley. He had several children and a brother, William, who never married. Dr. W. C. Tarpley, son of Mason, married Tempey Holt, whose daughter married F. W. Fonville, the grandfather of D. R. Fonville, Trustee of Elon College. Mason Tarpley was always very prominent in the work at the old log school-house as was his son, Dr. W. C. Tarpley, and very prominent in the Christian Church.

Austin Whitsett, another prominent man in the society is the grandfather of ^{Dr} W. T. Whitsett, writer and poet. Michael Holt had a son named William, who married Sarah Steel, daughter of Col. John Steel of Revolutionary fame. He had six sons and two daughters. Four of these sons, Dr. Michael, Dr. Sam, Dr. Pleasant Allen and John, were university men. All of these sons went to school at the old log schoolhouse. ^{His} son, John, was a very prominent preacher of his day. William Holt was one of the builders of the first Church at Providence and always took an active part in the work of the school. Michael Holt had a daughter, Sarah, who married John Harden. They had a son, John. ^{His} father died when he was young, and his mother in her will set, ^{aside} a fund for the education of John with the provision that if it ^{was} ~~was~~ not sufficient, then there was another asset to be used. Now this was Col. John Harden, the father of P. R. Harden, D. C. Harden and J. W. Harden, and the grandfather of Junius H. Harden. Col. John Harden sold the land to the Trustees of Graham College. All of these men went to the old log schoolhouse and were all identified with the work of the Church. Michael Holt had a son named Issac and ~~he had~~ a daughter named Mariah, who married George Foust. They had two sons, Issac and Thomas C. Thomas C. had two sons. One holds the position of Supt. of schools in Guilford County; the other is President of the North Carolina ~~Normal~~ ^{for Women;} College, at Greensboro. *Both of these educators attended the Graham Normal College.*

The writer went to the last school that Rev. John R. Holt taught at the old log schoolhouse and remembers W. H. Trollinger, Jackson Pinnix (Dr. Pinnix), Thomas C. Foust, Eugene ^{Graham} Greeson (Supt. ~~Insane~~ ^{Asylum} at Raleigh), John Royster, Stephen Glass, W.V. Montgomery, and Flack Lambert, all men of character and prominence.

The writer has probably taxed the patience of the reader by referring to so many who were connected with this school, but the object ~~was~~ ^{has been} to impress upon the mind of the reader that this school was not what they called the old-field school which was often presided over by men of very little education. On the other ~~hand~~ ^{hand the teachers} ~~they~~ ^{had} were competent and well qualified to teach. John R. Holt was a fine Greek scholar and the most of them were ^{highly} educated ^{and cultured} men.

The men ^{who were connected with} ~~clustered around~~ this place were alive to the necessity of an education, ~~and~~ ^{insist upon} they never relaxed their efforts to ~~keep~~ ^{insist upon} the importance of a man knowing something. They believed an educated man made a better husband, a better father, a better citizen, a better neighbor and a better Christian, ~~and~~ they did not stop to argue the point whether a man descended from a monkey or a bear. They were ^{men} of too much good practical knowledge to fool their time away with modern ^{im} and such non-essential subjects. They would rather a boy could do an example in the double rule of three, than to know about a truck load of monkeys or bears.

So after many years, or in 1849, when they found that the old log house was not suitable, they decided to build Graham Institute. The money for this work was raised by the men of the Christian Churches of Virginia and North Carolina and they kept the fire burning notwithstanding the fact that it ^{burned it times} ~~gave~~ very low. Still they kept adding fuel until September 1, 1863 when it went apparently out and ~~it~~ was sold at the Sheriff's sale to H. J. B. Clark for \$4200.00, (There is no record to show what went with this money) and hope had apparently fled. But not so, ^{re} The friends moved to Elon College and there ^{re} kindled the fire anew, ^{and} These men stood by with their mite of fuel. ^{truly now} ~~and~~ The fire is burning ^{again}, and we hope not

to go out again, for this same breed of people will throw in the fuel, ~~if they see it about to go out~~ ^{by} And we believe ^{we} to judge the future by the past it will not go out, especially ^{as} so long as we have such a fine body of stokers as we now have.

About the year 1826, Daniel W. Kerr taught a school north of Raleigh about where Wake Forest is now. ^{he taught} Later, at a school near Mt. Zion in Orange County; then he moved his school to Pittsboro, North Carolina. William Bingham taught a school for young men near Oak ^a in Orange County, North Carolina. We have no date for this school, but it was considered a most excellent ^{one} school. At the time Graham Institute started Alexander Wilson had a school for young men at Burnt Shop, now Melville. Dr. E. F. Watson conducted a school for young ladies at his home near Stoney Creek Church, which closed at the beginning of the war between the States, after running about fifteen years. The place was called Watsonville. Legend says Albert Anderson taught a school where old Trinity College afterward ^{and it is related to} was located in Randolph County, but we know nothing of the particulars. The above is about the history of Education in the vicinity of the old log schoolhouse.

In 1731 orders were sent from England that no one should be allowed to teach school in North Carolina unless he had a certificate from the Bishop of London, giving him authority to teach. It seems it was the policy to discourage education as much as possible. The Lords Proprietors and the King made it ^{their} ~~their~~ business to keep the common man in ignorance as much as possible. By examining our ancient history you will find there was nothing done for the upbuilding or ^{uplift} ~~uplift~~ of the common man until after American Independence. Herman Husband, John Fugh, Solomon Apple and Ludwig Clapp fired their guns at Alamance ^{where the school} ~~It~~ was heard around the world. ^{is was then the setting that} ~~and~~ It said man was no longer a slave, and When Eli Whitney finished his fiddle and began to make his cotton gin, and James Watts fired up his steam engine, they blazed out a trail that led men from slavery and oppression to a life of ease and comfort, ~~and~~

Since that time there had been more done for the ^{improvement} betterment of
humanity than had been done, ^{during} the whole time since creation. Bishop
Asbury when he came over from England, told his people what they
had to do was "work, pray, ^{and} obey". That was when James O'Kelly
kicked out of harness and the Christian Church with its
spirit of Christian liberty began. The leaders of this Church
found the old log schoolhouse in George (now Plummer) County.
H. S. Currantline

Burlington N.C.
Sept 12th 1925

